DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 295 450 FL 016 624

AUTHOR Potoker, Elaine
TITLE Experiential Units of Study in Foreign Language through Partnerships with Business.
PUB DATE Apr 86
NOTE 10p.; In: Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages for Business and the Professions (see FL 016 586).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Business Administration Education; *Business Communication; *Business Correspondence; Course Content; *Course Organization; Educational Objectives; Instructional Effectiveness; Instructional Materials; International Trade; *Languages for Special Purposes; Language Skills; *School Business Relationship; Second Language Instruction; Units of Study

ABSTRACT

Curricula for business language instruction should be (1) based on analysis of the routine operations of local business, industry, and service organizations, (2) in the form of practical units of study for sequential development of target language competencies, and (3) accomplished through integrated partnerships with local business. Instructional materials should provide more realistic portrayals of business transactions between American and foreign customers, focus clearly on the controllable and non-controllable circumstances of local business, and provide an understanding of what it takes to do business well overseas. Most commercial materials about business transactions do not illustrate well the depth or length of an interaction, which might include a letter inquiry, responses, letters of clarification, an offer, legal considerations, investigations, and computations. Assessment of the business environment would address geography and market, advertising and promotion, values concerning responsibility and productivity, technological considerations, accounting and budgeting needs, reasons and means for problem-solving, and environmental and industrial standards. An experiential unit might require that a student analyze many aspects of a product, such as market, manufacture, shipping, promotion, and sale in the United States and overseas. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

634

ED295450

EXPERIENTIAL UNITS OF STUDY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS WITH BUSINESS

Elaine Potoker

Interloqui
Import/Export Services Division
1611 Peach St.,Suite 290
Erie, Pennsylvania 16501 U.S.A.

(814) 866-3871

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Wright

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

FL016624

Elaine (Minskey) Potoker
Manager, Import Export Services Div.
INTERLOQUI
Erie, Pa.

EXPERIENTIAL UNITS OF STUDY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS WITH BUSINESS

A recent article in BUSINESS AMERICA,[1] discusses the effects of international trade on input and output employment. The article is based upon a U. S. Dept. of Commerce (Office of Business Analysis) study discussing, "Trade Ripples Across U. S. Industries". The report suggests that employment, "across the board", is feeling the importance of international trade, and details the respective gains by industry. The figures reflect the fact that more and more jobs are directly, and increasingly indirectly dependent upon trade (--"indirectly", meaning the so-described,[2] "hidden" jobs feeling "ripple" effects of trade--or the job attached to a product/service which is integral to an exported product/service. News of some gains, despite the fact that they are not keeping up with the burgeoning trade deficit--higher than it has ever been at this writing and still growing, is still good news, none-the-less. Although the topic is not new, the statistics presented provide a fresh introduction to any discussions which might address educational preparation for the "professions".

The aforementioned report involves a familiar scenario which continues to have educational implications. Businesspeople and educators alike are behooved to seek more effective resources which will prepare future professionals to be productive and energetic in a competitive arena. There is no industry today--whether it be

service industries, agriculture, transportation, utilities, chemicals etc., that will not be feeling the "ripples" now and in future years.

What resources might be utilized more effectively to "do it" better as regards the topic of preparation for "Languages and the Professions"--the subject of this Conference? This writer encourages the analysis of the routine operations of local business, industry, and service organizations for practical units of study for sequential development of competencies in the target language, to be accomplished through integrated partnerships with local business. The key words here are "analysis" and "sequential" and "integrated" as relates to program planning and implementation, rather than "associations or partnerships" without the adjectives preceding.

A review of the "canned" materials addressing the subject of (language) preparation for business indicates that most do attempt to address all or some of the following business situations through dialogues and exercises in the target language:

looking for work, filling out an application
renting an office
insurance
filing a lawsuit
office jobs and equipment
broad product classifications
airport/travel/travel agency
import/export scenes
bank exchanges
bank accounts/loans
metric system
commercial documents
commercial correspondence

Although knowledge of foreign language as regards these situations can unquestionably be of value, many other elements are in need of further attention if the hope is to prepare students for the business environs described earlier.

The suggestions to follow are meant for utilization for students entering internships, but are especially emphasized for sequential foreign language and social studies program(s) development from early instructional levels, (kindergarten) through senior high school.

In specific terms, resources reviewed need to address the following more effectively:

1) Realistic portrayals of the progression of a business transaction between a U. S. and foreign customer, and vice-versa; use of visuals that are not oversimplified; dialogues that are examples of clear, and professional communication in a cross-cultural environment.

2) Clear focus on the environs, controllable and non-controllable, facing local business.

3) Understanding of "what it takes" to do business well overseas, along with acceptance of cross cultural buying influences.

EXAMPLE: The generation of a transaction between a U. S. and foreign supplier, is not typically a phone call to Mrs. Jones from Mr. López (in the Hotel Sheraton lobby) to discuss the purchase of spices, telecommunications equipment, fabric, or a plastic component part. Typically, "canned" dialogues are portrayed in such a way, with transactions being "quick" and few variables shown as affecting them. The visuals utilized (i.e., an invoice), are often totally unrepresentative of the details which are routinely part of such transactions.

Typically, the genesis of a business transaction might entail: (in very general terms):

letter inquiry---responses---several more letters for clarification--an offer, based upon a review of economic, cultural, technical factors, and legal considerations which may be involved---investigations---computations which may involve currency exchange, metric system conversions, ad. value duty rates, shipping/transportation decisions, and a good deal of patience. The genesis is an excellent resource for classroom use, and lends itself well to materials preparation.

4) Most concerning, recalling the BUSINESS AMERICA article mentioned earlier, is the fact that materials utilized often do not convey a razon d'etre. Rather than say, "where's the beef", one must ask, "where's the focus"? For what are we preparing the student? Obviously, the answer is, "job longevity"; or, to deal productively and effectively with the "ripples" talked about earlier, and more importantly, to create some of his/her own.

Perhaps, part of the problem with some of the texts reviewed, is they try to cover too many subject areas, and the result is that many are not covered adequately or realistically.

The following is offered as an experiential guideline for development of foreign language materials in cooperation with a local business example.

[3]

BEGIN WITH: THE LOCAL BUSINESS

SIT DOWN WITH THE INDIVIDUAL WHO IS MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE OF THE ENVIRONS--DOMESTIC AND WORLDWIDE, WHICH THE FIRM MAY FACE [4]

You may say, "who is going to give me that time"? That attitude is not really in tune with the reality facing businesses today. It is in business's best interest, to be of assistance. The fear of loss of market(s) on a broad scale; the fear of loss of job security, are great motivators.

Figures 1 and 2 are guidelines to facilitate analysis of the environs of a particular business and/or industry, in order to develop realistic and sequentially developed units of study for the purposes earlier described.

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2

Business Environs Assessment

(Figure 1)

1. GEOGRAPHY/ MAP SKILLS/ READING, LOCATING AND INTERPRETATION OF INFORMATION	1. CUSTOMERS AND THEIR LOCATION: Where and to whom does a particular company sell in the U. S.? Where and to whom are they selling overseas? How do products get transported? What are important factors determining sources of supply.
2. COMMUNICATION SKILLS	2. ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONS: communicating clearly, defining, understanding others, family living, foreign language considerations.
3. VALUES AS REGARDS RESPONSIBILITY & PRODUCTIVITY	3. THE WORK ETHIC: fostering a good attitude toward work, quality work, cross cultural aspects of self-esteem as relates to one's work.
4. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	4. R & D, ENGINEERING DESIGN, STANDARDS OF MEASUREMENT
5. ANALYTICAL THINKING	5. MATH SKILLS: budgeting, computing costs, making a quotation; GATHERING DATA, PROCESSING INFORMATION.
6. PROBLEM SOLVING	6. How do businesses solve problems they face when selling worldwide? What are those problems? (i.e., transportation, language, seasonal differences, currency and governmental regulations, ALL OF THE ABOVE.)
7. HEALTH AND SAFETY	7. ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS, INDUSTRIAL STANDARDS.

Copyright 1984 Elaine Minskey Potoker
("Translating Economic and Political Realities Into Educational Goals")

Guideline for Experiential Unit for Business/Industry

(Figure 2)

1. Describe (product).
2. How is_____ similar to other_____? How is it different?
3. Describe all the possible situations (sectors) where |_____| might be required.
4. Describe how_____is manufactured. What factors contribute to high quality? to low quality?
5. Standards of measurement for_____in U.S.A.? overseas?
6. What other factors will affect the manufacture of_____?
7. Who generally becomes involved in a shipment of|_____| within the U.S.A.? How many parties may be involved in a shipment of |_____| overseas?
8. How might one promote |_____| in the U.S.A.? How and in what way will that change overseas?
9. What factors limit the sale of |_____| in the U.S.A.? What factors affect the sale of |_____| overseas?
10. How does one make an offer of sale (quotation) to a U.S. customer? an overseas customer?
11. How and why do companies decide to sell overseas? How and why do companies decide to sell or not to sell domestically?
12. How can one find out where_____are being shipped globally?
13. What factors affect a decision to buy? sell? in the U.S.A.? overseas?
14. What is vital to the ongoing success of any business?

Copyright 1984 Elaine Minskey Potoker
("Translating Economic and Political Realities Into Educational Goals")

Specific to business and foreign language training, the desired outgrowth is threefold: 1) to focus upon vocabulary and expressions in the target language which may be key to product, promotion, and many other variables, including but not limited to legal, banking, and finance practices; 2) to foster appreciation and understanding of the competencies and assessments which must be addressed when a firm decides to expand its activities beyond U. S. borders; 3) to recognize buying influences, including cross-cultural factors, affecting product or services. When all this (and more!) is done, the conversation between Mr. López and Mrs. Jones will come a good deal closer to the real world as regards language for business and the professions.

Footnotes

1-2. Duncan, Jennifer, Ann Lawson, and Kan Young. "Exports Generate 'Hidden' Job Gains." BUSINESS AMERICA (March 3, 1986):6-10.

3. Utilize Figures 1 and 2 as a guide to selection.

4. Refer to Figures 1 and 2 as a focus guide to that meeting or meetings.